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Amália Rodrigues in Africa

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Amália Rodrigues (1920-1999) was responsible for the popularization of fado in her own country and in the Portuguese colonies. The article approaches the relationship between the singer and the Salazar´s dictatorship, as well as the complex meanings of the reception of her songs in the colonial world.

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Amália Rodrigues (1920-1999) was the most important Portuguese fado singer and after starting her career rapidly became known not only in Portugal but also in the rest of the world. Fruit of a period of the modernization of the music industry in her country, Amália became a type of spokesperson for the

nationalization of the musical genre she sang so well. Between the 1930s and 1940s the growth of Portuguese radio broadcasting meant that from the north to the south of the country, as well as its overseas territories, this type of singing, previously largely restricted to around Lisbon, became the most important expression of Portuguese popular music. Estrela Carvas, born in Vila Real, Trás os Montes, in 1942, moved when young to Angola. As a young girl Estrela followed Amália on the radio and soon fell in love with the singer. At the age of eighteen, having returned to Portugal, she knocked on the door of Amália's house, on Rua de São Bento. From then on she became the singer's principal assistant, accompanying her all over the world. [1] Estrela's example is obviously peculiar. She was the only one who managed to reach the intimacy of Amália. However, this brief report demonstrates how fado and Amália built a home for themselves overseas.



Amália and the Portuguese tavern (undated)

Source: Fundação António Quadros

It was not always like that: between its birth as a musical genre in the nineteenth century and its acceptance by the mainstream, fado traveled along the narrow winding streets of Bairro Alto, Alfama, and Mouraria. For much time it remained in these peripheral neighborhoods, 'out of doors,' on the outskirts of the city waiting for the right moment to conquer the space due to it. In the nineteenth century more than a few among the thinking elites of Portugal looked down on fado and the *fadista*, as the musicians who played fado were known. I will cite two examples which appear to me to be paradigmatic of Portuguese intellectuality in that century: Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro and Ramalho Ortigão. The former, a notable illustrator, ceramist, and journalist referred to *fadistas* as follows: "The genuine *fadista* from Lisbon even has a particular haircut: two locks of hair that fall to the sides covering his ears, and sticking out from under his hat or cap. This is an indispensable complement to his brothel outfit." [2] Ramalho Ortigão, a

writer belonging to the Portuguese '*Geração de 70*' wrote in the same tone: "The *fadista* does not work nor does he have any capital representing savings from previous work. He lives on subterfuges by exploiting those close to him. He is supported by a public woman whom he systematically beats." [3]

Despite the suspicion fado slowly and gradually professionalized, above all between 1910 and 1920 with the creation of houses and cafés specializing in it. Shortly after the beginning of the 1926 military dictatorship legislation was enacted which adopted mechanisms of control and censorship to prevent subversive messages or those 'unsuited' to morality. [4] Nevertheless, even after a process of 'domestication,' it took some time to be fully accepted by the dictatorship of the *Estado Novo*. Gradually, censorship and the policies adopted to regulate it removed from fado its tone of protest and sarcasm typical of the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the following century. According to Joaquim Pais de Britto, "fado was not regime music, but at the end of the 1930s it was possible to present it stripped of many of the attributes which had marked it and dragged it to areas which those in power did not control." [5] Here can be perceived two distinct moments, albeit entangled in each other: on the one hand, fado was in part controlled by the mechanisms of censorship in such a way that romantic and nationalist themes began to prevail in its lyrics, replacing satire and protest; on the other hand, the modernization of the country nationalized the genre until then restricted to the urban spaces of Lisbon, Porto, and Coimbra. In her master's study of *fadistas* in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Flávia Branco showed that almost all of them were not aware of fado when they left their villages, as almost all came from rural areas in the north of Portugal. They only became aware of it in Brazil, as it spread rapidly in the country from the 1930s onwards. [6]

Portuguese Africa

When Amália began to sing professionally in 1939, the *Estado Novo* was going through a period of relative stability. Nevertheless, the uncertain developments resulting from the war that began that year caused fears among the regime's elites; not only in relation to the continuity of the dictatorship, but also regarding sovereignty over its overseas territories. The map illustrated below, published by the National Secretariat of Propaganda (SPN) in 1934, with the Portuguese colonies superimposed on Europe and stating that Portugal is not a small country, is a demonstration of the colonialist impulse not only of the regime, but also - at least at that time - of the opposition elites. Just to add a brief detail, in the 1950s the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre visited the Portuguese colonies funded by the *estadonovista* dictatorship and wrote texts about his African experience which gave a certain theoretical support to the idea that Portugal was a "multiracial, pluricontinental, and indivisible" country. [7]



"Portugal is not a small country"

Source: Malomil

Returning to Amália. Her professional career began in the well-known Lisbon restaurant *O Retiro da Severa*. Her fame spread all over the country very quickly and even beyond the frontiers of Portugal. Much has been said about Amália and her importance for culture in Portugal. Much has also been said about her supposed approximation with the authoritarian regime of the *Estado Novo*. However, although at that time Portugal was a colonizing country and kept its overseas empire until 1975, little has been said or written about the presence of Amália Rodrigues in the African territories to which she travelled on six occasions between 1951 and 1972. [8] In the various newspapers and magazines of Angola and Mozambique, mainly during her visits, but not only so, long reports highlighted the figure of Amália and her importance for Portuguese culture. Before moving on, I would like to note the quality of these periodicals. A quality which evidences the presence in Africa of elites and middle classes who bought and read such well printed newspapers and magazines. And which also contained on their pages quite a variety of themes, from international politics to the culture of popular music, sports, etc.

In relation to this public, a brief observation should be made. It is difficult to identify with great precision those who watched Amália's shows. Curiously, in the reports of the African newspapers and magazines, there are no photos of any concerts or their audiences. Equally there do not exist more profound studies of culture and cultural practices of the elites and the middle classes of these territories. The work of André Victorino Mindoso, a pioneer in this sense, demonstrates the difficulties suffered by the *assimilados* - literate whites or blacks who received the status of Portuguese citizenship. For example, their presence in cinemas was very low, there were even reports of physical constraints. [9] For the Angolan case, in the period of the so-called 'late colonialism,' [10] i.e. contemporaneous to the colonial wars, some studies in the demographic and sociological fields present us with data that is indicative of those who in theory could

watch these concerts. At the time of Angolan independence in 1975, it had around 5.4 million inhabitants. Of these, between 320,000 and 350,000 were whites living in the territory. [11] Although important, the information about the number of whites says little, since many of them were poor and/or living in areas that were so distant that access to urban spaces was difficult. However, this data can dialogue with the survey of what Paulo de Carvalho called, in relation to 1970, the "framework of economically active citizens." The "bourgeoisie and the large *fazendeiros*" consisted of around 5,000 people; the "petite bourgeoisie and small *fazendeiros*" amounted to 35,000 individuals, the same number for "public employees and technicians." The other classes listed by him, "masters and foremen," "proletariat," "proto-proletariat," and "agricultural workers" were not able to access shows and nor would they be able to enter clubs or large concert halls. [12] For the Mozambican case, according to Mindoso, the Portuguese *Estado Novo* established a set of social categories, with the most important being 'Colonist,' '*Assimilado*,' and 'Indigenous.' In Mozambique, in 1960, the number of each of these classifications was 63,386, 34,427, and 5,646,957, respectively. In relation to the social condition of the *assimilados*, it is difficult to be precise and estimates can vary a lot. In 1960, 109,707 individuals held the status of Portuguese citizens, distributed as follows: 1. Of a white origin or Portuguese: 63,386; 2. Mixed: 29,586; 3. Of Indian origin: 11,044; 4. 'Civilized' blacks: 4,530; 5. Yellow: 1153. [13] José Luís Cabaço's study, although without greater statistical data, reinforces the thesis of the constraints imposed on the *assimilados*, and their permanent status as 'lesser citizens,' 'less Portuguese,' than the whites, whether born in Africa or the Metropole. The much vaunted commitment of the regime to assimilationist policies ran into the resistance of whites, who continued to classify the natives, whether mixed or blacks, *assimilados* or indigenous, as *blacks*. According to Cabaço: "The racism which impregnated this classification based on the common sense of the dominator naturalized social life and the perception of the other." [14] In short, there were middle classes and elites capable of consuming good newspapers, good magazines, and good shows. However, the class condition, although important, is not sufficient to understand the distinctions determined in these cases by skin color.

"A song telling us, Portugal"

In my reading of Angolan and Mozambican newspapers what stands out is the repetition of a series of themes which, when taken together, almost conceive of Amália as a type of "national monument." [15] The first of these themes is the essentially Portuguese condition of Amália. Moreover, this is shown both in the genre she sang and her behavior. During her first trip to Africa in 1951, *Diário de Luanda* exalted the friendliness of the singer as well as the sense of Portugueseness of her music, which united the metropole and the overseas territories: "Amália will be the loving messenger to give us news of our brothers, their joys, their feelings of love, and their significant melodies which come together with the blood that flows in our veins. And so, we can feel the secret of a song telling us, Portugal!" Amália was thus the expression of a Portugueseness capable of approximating the various places which spoke Portuguese: "Amália, great Amália, soul of fado, the greatest Portuguese artist of the current day since she can attract large multitudes who applaud her deliriously when they hear her sing..." Next it referenced a declaration of the Brazilian writer José Lins do Rego: "Amália touches the hearts of Brazilians making them moan out a confession that we are still Portuguese." [16] At two distinct moments a decade apart, Amália, in interviews given to the overseas press, exalted the landscapes which interlinked Portugal, Brazil, and the African provinces. The first of these interviews dates from 1951. Asked about what she had most liked in Luanda, Amália replied its architecture demonstrative of the Portuguese legacy:

> *"For me this forms an admirable mark of the Portuguese presence in this great land, and an affective mark of the antiquity and the occupation of colonization by the Portuguese. These houses should not be demolished, they should be preserved. I was also enchanted with the beach. It is a wonder, it is a privileged beach."* [?]

In 1962, the speech was the same. Amália pointed to the similarities between Luanda, seen from São Miguel Fort, Lisbon and Guanabara. She also praised the changes in the city: "It is much more beautiful, more of a city. But the public who welcomed me, who generously applauded me without hearing me sing and asked me for autographs, this is exactly the same as it was some years ago. The public from Luanda, the people of Portugal. Just like everywhere. My dear public!" In the same year, Amália lamented the fact that a Lisbon magazine had said that she was no longer Portuguese and had become Brazilian. "I like Brazil a lot, as I have said before, but I would not change my Homeland for any other. In Brazil, where we live for some months in the year, they know it perfectly. First of all, and above all, I defend Portugal." [17]

After her first experience in Africa, Amália had to wait until the beginning of the following decade to return to the continent. Her arrival in Luanda in August 1962 was hailed by the Angolan press. *Diário de Luanda* praised the smile and good mood of the singer "whose name crossed the frontiers of our country some time back." However, it lamented the fact that journalists had been prohibited by the authorities from approaching the airport runway, in a clear attempt to prevent the press from interviewing the most important Portuguese 'star.' Nevertheless, to the contentment of press in Luanda, Amália granted them a brief interview so that "in addition to being a great artist, she did the favor of being a sympathetic friend from the very day she arrived in Luanda." The same newspaper was grateful too for the courteous way in which Amália and her husband had received a delegation of Angolan journalists in a reception offered by the couple in Rio de Janeiro. [18] In a news report, on the day after her arrival, it reported Amália's meeting with the Angolan press. On the same day, 10 August, Amália was giving a show in Cinema Avis and the newspaper predicted its success: "It will undoubtedly be a great and new triumph, because Amália continues to be, in the genre, not only the best Portuguese artist, but a great Portuguese artist known around the world. This was won, without favor, through her talent, a talent that became simplicity." The interview had taken place at the Continental Hotel where she was staying. Amália started "talking pleasantly, always with that natural note of simplicity which is her timbre, with all those people from the radio, the newspapers, or linked to them, until after 8 in the evening." Also in August 1962, *Revista de Angola* put a photo of the singer on its cover.



Revista de Angola put a photo of the singer on its cover (August 1962)

Source: Revista de Angola, 55 (agosto de 1962)

The report about her was, as usual, highly complimentary. The text spoke of the arrival of the singer in Luanda accompanied by her husband, César: "a triumphal reception, proving the appreciation and sympathy which she enjoys in this Province, where her voice, impregnated with human warmth, has the value of a message of *saudade* for the people from the Metropole who live here." It also praised the friendliness of the singer who, having barely arrived in Luanda, insisted on receiving journalists and broadcasters for a 'drink' in a reception in the Continental Hotel. Her first show was, according to the periodical, an absolute success, "with the seats sold out and the audience vibrating with enthusiasm, with her interpretation of typical songs of Portuguese traditional life in her unparalleled voice, her voice of gold, which goes directly to the heart of all Portuguese of the race who hear it." It reaffirmed the opinion, already almost consensual amongst those from the metropole and the overseas territories: "Amália is actually the greatest interpreter of 'national music'." [19]

A Portuguese woman, who, and this is the second theme, without abandoning her roots, won international fame and recognition. An artist who brought Portugal to the entire world. In the issue of the first half of February 1960, for example, *Revista de Angola* had a long report about Amália. It was entitled "Amália: the most international of our artists." The text, which was quite complimentary, spoke of her return to Portugal after a period in Brazil and the charm she had provided to Brazilians. "Amália, the great Amália, the Portuguese artist with the greatest international projection at present returned a few days ago to Portugal, after a long period in Brazil, where she has moved the Portuguese hearts which live there and feel Portugal in her fados and songs." In that year she would spend a season in Paris, "where a renowned critic said that 'all the birds of melancholy sang in her voice'." Also according to the text, the French knew Amália from the film *Os Amantes do Tejo* by Henri Verneuil (1954).

VIDEO

View online: https://tracs-prod.s3.rbx.io.cloud.ovh.net/assets/records/amalia-rodrigues-em-africa/resources/barco-negro.mp4

Barco negro, *Os Amantes do Tejo*, 1954

Source: Fadomeu

In the video above Amália Rodrigues appears interpreting *Barco Negro*, by Caco Velho and David Mourão Ferreira, the best known songs among those which appeared in the film.

Following this, "they want to see her and listen to her live, and today they view her as one of the great artists who have visited Paris." Her record *Lisboa Antiga* sold around 600,000 copies in France. In addition, around 30,000 tourists from France visited Portugal to visit the neighborhood of Mouraria, where Amália was born. [20] After the filming of *Os Amantes do Tejo* in 1955, Amália established herself as an idol in France. In the following year she sang for the first time in the Olympia in Paris with huge success. The result of this concert was the recording of a live record *Amália à l'Olympia*, one of the most important in her career.

The magazine also asked: "What else is it necessary to say to prove the extraordinary popularity of Amália, in France?" However, her importance extrapolated the frontiers of Europe. "Amália is seen in Paris, as in North America, as an existentialist, in the good sense, a little similar to the characters of Dostoïevski," according to a Brazilian journalist. There actually was a certain melancholy, somewhat 'Dostoïevskian' and 'profoundly Portuguese' which Amália presented to the world:

> *"Amália returned to Europe, returned to Portugal and will sing again in Paris, which adores her. The English want her to sing 'Coimbra' in London. The Belgians want her to sing 'Coimbra' in Brussels. The Americans want her to sing 'Coimbra' in New York. And she says yes, and rehearses for nothing, then says no, in a very natural inconstancy, typical of those who, like her, have worked so hard, constantly wandering around the world, making the name of Portugal better known through her voice..."* [?]

As *Diário de Luanda* stated in a 1962 publication: "In shop windows in the capitals of Europe and America her records with the great title 'Amália' appear alongside other creations which dazzle the world." [21] And, to crown her numerous trips abroad, her art reproduced Portuguese existence: "There she is, giving existence to the Portuguese soul, opening the hearts of lovers, in her intimate poetry, sung in the ways of those who suffer misunderstandings and incomprehension, making the hearts of that immense crowd who do not tire listening to her vibrate with her unmistakable voice..." [22]

Diário de Luanda also stated that Amália was going to leave for Edinburgh where she would sing in the International Festival of Scotland and afterwards go on to Paris, where she would remain for two months in contracts with local nightclubs. [23] Amália's concerts in Paris were reported in the same newspaper. The periodical gave information about the interview given to the daily newspaper *France Soir*. Asked how she felt in the French capital, Amália answered that "each time she left the country, her *saudades* made her feel 'irremediably Portuguese'." [24]

"An institution like Dietrich and Piaf"

Both in Africa and in Asia, Amália was recognized in territories not colonized by Portugal. This was a permanent theme of African periodicals published in Portuguese. In April 1966, Amália sang in South Africa, in an event called the "Republic Festival Show," an occasion when the Portuguese representation was totally dedicated to Angola. At the decision of the jury of this festival, the Portuguese pavilion received the gold medal. "A triumph for Portugal and Angola, which was suddenly talked about in South Africa," reported *Notícia* from April of that year. However, the reason for the Portuguese success went beyond this. According to the newspaper: "Exploring the situation we have a new triumph: the presence of Amália, who there - like everywhere - achieved complete success." The newspaper also referred to Amália's visit to the Portuguese pavilion:

> *"One of the most attentive and surprising visitors was Amália Rodrigues. Finding in Johannesburg a Portuguese pavilion with the category of ours was something we least expected. At dinner time another surprise was waiting: a typical surprise (which is really in fashion in Johannesburg) where our food is presented in an excellent manner. Caldo verde with green wine and barbecue with cuca [32] taste different when they are found abroad. Amália knows it well and possibly sang with even more feeling after a dinner like this." [33]*

Months later in October *Revista de Angola* reported a tour by Amália of South Africa and its impact. To register the success of the singer, the Angolan magazine reproduced a report published in *AS Financial Gazette,* a Johannesburg magazine:

> *"Amália is a grande dame of the stage - an institution like Dietrich and Piaf. She has an extraordinary voice, a fatalistic voice.*
> *When she sings all the philosophy and all the feeling of simple souls is obvious. Her presentation is planned as careful as that of Dietrich, but with a more hidden technique.*
> *The features of her restful physiognomy help the fatalist passages she sings. Her style gives taste to the popular Portuguese songs she interprets, her voice is warm and sincere, her diction precise, and her gestures delicate and touching.*
> *Amália is a rare artist - an artist in harmony with the joys and tragedies of life. All of her is heart, all of her is beauty, and total resignation."*

Finally, the magazine stated its contentment in divulging such a complimentary foreign review of Amália: "A beautiful, touching, and enthusiastic 'portrait' of our - Portuguese - Amália, treated with soul by a renowned South African critic - this is what stays in mind." [25]

Unifying simplicity with internationalism, *Notícias da Beira*, a Mozambican newspaper, published a text about a dinner of Amália and a group of Americans. The combination of intelligence and simplicity "captivated the foreigners," as the poet said.

> *"The Lisbon sun and the simplicity of its people permeated Amália's simple and colorful words. She began speaking of the humility of her birth, her happy and carefree youth.*
> *When asked about how she had learned English, she answered:*
> *"When I was young I sold knickknacks to the tourists. I would learn the names of the things I sold, and even some words of thanks and friendly greetings. I learned to say Thank you, Yes sir... From then on everything was easy. However, as you can see, I never managed more than this English I am speaking to you."*
> *It should be noted that the English which Amália used was excellent, better even - some of those present said - than many, except for English and Americans, have used in meetings characterized by the high level of the participants.*
> *Amália was successful. It was in that simple manner which was born with her."* [34]

The simple and also sophisticated manner; the spontaneity and the knowledge of English; her own 'method' which allowed her speak English.

Finally, the third theme is unifying the metropole and the colonies. At a moment of crisis, with the colonial war having begun in 1961, the regime's discourse necessarily involved the defense of the overseas territories. For this reason, in the 1962 trip, *Diário de Luanda* confirmed that, in addition to the planned shows, there would also be a concert for Portuguese soldiers. [26] Amália actually sang in Carmona, now called Uíge, located around 340 km to the north of Luanda. Carmona was then important in the anticolonial conflict, the reason for the presence of a large military garrison. The presentation was free and meant for both the local population as well as the military allocated to that region. The newspaper stated:

> *"Our beloved star goes tomorrow to Carmona, as we have reported..., in order to give a show that is free to enter for the civil and military population. Once again we justly highlight Amália's generous attitude, as she has sacrificed a day of rest to satisfy the desire of many to hear her in person in Carmona, where a great reception is being prepared for the number one interpreter of National Music."* [35]

Amália's last tour of the old colonies - 1972, as we have seen - took place between April and July of that year. *O Notícia* stated that Amália, as in the 1960s, gave a concert for the Portuguese soldiers sent to the colonial war and visited the sick in the Military Hospital. [27] *Diário de Luanda* also referred to Amália's presentation to the Portuguese soldiers: "Amália goes to Angola especially to sing purposely to the brilliant soldiers who are fighting in defense of the integrity of their Homeland." [28] In relation to the fact of singing to the soldiers at war, invited by the Ministry of Overseas, Amália clarified that she sang for the Portuguese Armed Forces for free:

> *"I am immensely happy to return to Angola and very especially with the purpose of singing for these brave boys whom I admire so much and to whom I have already dedicated some verses into which all my admiration went.*
> *[...]*
> *And for the soldiers, are you singing for free? [the reporter asked]*
> *Yes! - replied Amália - I can tell you, not that it serves as propaganda but only so that everything will be duly clarified, that I am paying the four guitarists myself. The Armed Forces were only responsible for the transport and the accommodation. This is my tribute to these young men whom I so much admire and whom I would very much like to see, as quickly as possible, return to their homes, to live with their families. A sign that the war will have ended."* [36]

Amália, however, was not a 'spokesperson' of the regime. And while fado, in the form it was conceived after the 1930s, was actually palatable to the interests of the dictatorship, Amália knew how to act with some independence, at least from the 1960s onwards. It is what I have called 'diversion.' Having established herself as the most important Portuguese artist, Amália did not 'remain paralyzed' in the style with which she had made her name. To the contrary, she was directly responsible for demonstrative innovations of her boldness and artistic sensibility. In the middle of the 1960s, alongside the traditional songs in her repertoire, Amália accepted the challenge of singing works written by famous Portuguese poets, such as Luis de Camões, as well as various others linked to opposition to the Salazarist regime, such as David Mourão Ferreira, Pedro Homem de Melo, Ary dos Santos, Alexandre O'Neill, and Manuel Alegre. This change in direction was due to a large extent to the influence of the Franco-Portuguese pianist and composer Alain Oulman. Moreover, this aesthetic change in Amália gave people plenty to talk about. The most conservative, uncomfortable with the hermeticism of the lyrics interpreted by Amália, complained: "she sings Picasso lyrics." [29] It was thus an important moment of the transformation of *fadista* verses which, although they did not abandon romantic or bucolic themes, returned again to questions either more 'engaged' or more 'existential.' In general, in the diversity of the educated groups, there was a certain idea of heresy in trying to associate fado with 'high culture.' This controversy also emerged in Africa. In November 1965, *Notícias* magazine from Angola published a report about the theme with the title "Poetry left the books." Written by Angerino de Sousa, the text is illustrated with a drawing where Amália appears in the foreground with Camões in the background.

The column reflects the possible reactions of lower class people to Amália's 'new song':

> *"The fat, greasy, and unshaven grocer, stopped opening another sack and listened. The man in the grey suit, tied to constant searching in libraries and archives, closed his eyes in anger: during any day people now had in color, the verses which he, with so much sacrifice, had studied. The misunderstood painter drew on white paper some strange forms, but ones he felt deeply, which were his gloss of the poem, which the singer with such a crude past (they say) had activated for those who wanted them, who knew what was poetry, not because they walked in libraries and archives, but because they had in their blood children's laughter and on their skin the hunger for beauty.*
> *When everything was forgotten, all that was left was poetry, in the eyes of the people who expected it."* [37]

Revista de Angola also made a reference to and exalted the modernization of fado led by Amália:

> *"Amália has evolved. From the old weeping fado to new aspects of the 'national song.' They insist on calling it the national song - but it is. We are fadistas because of atavism... But she has evolved because, continuing to sing like only she can sing, she chose new rhythms and new lyrics and she is herself. Camões? If he should walk, more than he already does, among the schools, among the children, and in the streets arm in arm with the People. Was not he, the 'traga-mouros'* [38] *and 'trinca-fortes'* [39] *one of the people as well?*
> *[...]*
> *We are satisfied. Amália has evolved. Fado also. And from this symbiosis of both high moments of Art are born, which the spectators and simple listeners appreciate.*
> *Congratulations, Amália. Come back more often. More often... and more slowly and with more time."* [40]

Conclusion

Amália Rodrigues is the fruit of an epoch of development and modernization which gave her unequalled fame in the history of Portuguese speaking popular culture. Of course her undeniable talent was determinant. Other fado singers emerged at the same time and did not gain the same recognition, whether nationally or internationally. However, it is also true that without that modernizing impulse, the resonance of her artistic attributes would have been much less. At the same time, to the extent that its growing recognition occurred at the same time as the *Estado Novo*, the genre was to an extent appropriated by the regime.

The same means of communication played a decisive role in the formatting of an official nationalist discourse which knew how to use fado as an essential part of Portuguese national identity. Amália was raised to the condition of the principal representative of what was more than genuine, what was most pure, in the popular culture of her country. A culture that was, paraphrasing Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, invented, but no less efficient or legitimate. A representative of this imaginary Portugal, Amália, according to the African press, never lost her roots. She travelled around the world and spoke English with perfection, without abdicating the condition of Portuguese. In relation to the idea of a greater Portugal, with a continuous overseas territory, she won the hearts and minds of people in both the metropole and the colonies. To a certain extent she is the consequence of a colonialist identity, which in Portugal was not exclusive to conservatives. And I want to believe that Amália, in her trips to Africa, served as an important device to strengthen Portuguese nationalism in its overseas territories. On the repeated occasion when she claimed to be 'Portuguese above all' or sought to approximate African cities with Lisbon or Rio de Janeiro prove this. To me it seems that she knew what speech she should make. And she did this well.

Finally, it remains to reflect on the various occasions when, without being paid, she sang for the soldiers in the war. In this case, as is evident, this was a choice. Or an acceptance of an invitation from the authorities, which is nonetheless still a choice. Having made this observation, I believe that others seem equally important. As I said and repeat, colonial identity unified for years Portuguese with different political or ideological hues. It was thus not strange to see the *ultramar* (the overseas territories) as belonging to Portugal. Moreover, we are not here talking of a person engaged in this or that political field. Amália belonged to that universe which for the case of Vichy France, Pierre Laborie called the 'grey zone,' in other

words the majoritarian part of the population who chose, in light of Nazi occupation, not to engage directly in the conflict. [30] It was like this in Portugal and equally in various other dictatorships. Human behavior, as the philosopher David Hume says, tends to choose the common life, the ordinary life. [31]

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NOTES

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3 *Ibid*., 31.

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17 *Diário de Luanda*, 10/08/1962: 6, 9.

18 *Diário de Luanda*, 09/08/1962: 5, 6.

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26 *Diário de Luanda*, 08/08/1962: 12.

27 "Amália cantou para os soldados," *Notícia*, 332 (abril de 1966): 12.

28 *Diário de Luanda*, 12/04/1972: 18.

29 Rui Vieira Nery, *Para uma história do fado* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2012), 309.

30 Voir Pierre Laborie, *Les Français des années troubles. De la guerre d'Espagne à la Libération*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, coll. « Histoire », 2003.

31 David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political and Literary* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), 534-535.

32 Cuca: cake made with banana, wheat flour, sugar, margarine, eggs, milk and yeast.

33 "Portugal conquista a África do Sul," *Notícia*, 331 (abril de 1966): 17-19.

34 *Notícias da Beira*, 03/04/1967: 2.

35 *Diário de Luanda*, 19/08/1962: 3.

36 *Diário de Luanda*, 27/04/1972: 5.

37 "A poesia fugiu dos livros," *Notícia*, 27 (novembro de 1965): 12-3.

38 Traga-mouros: a violent individual or bully.

39 Trinca-fortes: a hooligan.

40 "Amália Rodrigues," *Revista de Angola*, 2ª quinzena (abril, 1966): 14.